

MKULTRA'S "Dr." Ewen Cameron Psychiatrist and Torturer

**Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Documentary
on "Fifth Estate", January 6, 1998**

Transcription courtesy of the Mind Control Forum
<http://www.mk.net/~mcf>

Announcer:

Behind closed doors, human guinea pigs in shocking mind control experiments conducted by our government and the CIA.

Female victim:

I had no identity, I had no memory, I'd never existed in the world before.

Announcer:

The horrors of "the sleep room" -- next on "The Fifth Estate."

...Interlude...

Announcer:

Tonight!

Female victim:

The man whom I had thought cared about what happened to me, didn't give a damn. I was a fly. Just a fly.

Announcer:

Revisiting Canada's infamous "sleep room."

Female victim:

I was -- had to be toilet trained; I was a vegetable.

Announcer:

In the 1960s Dr. Ewen Cameron conducted CIA funded experiments on troubled Canadian patients he was meant to help.

Male victim:

It wasn't treatment for anything. It was out and out guinea pigs for brainwashing experiments.

Announcer:

A Fifth Estate investigation revealed how one Canadian government secretly supported these horrific experiments, and then another blocked the victims' fight for justice.

Male voice:

The Mulrooney government, in effect, stabbed its citizens in the back at every turn.

Announcer:

Linden MacIntyre [spelling?] with the real life victims of "the sleep room," and behind the scenes of a new CBC movie about this nightmare chapter in our history.

...Interlude...

Linden MacIntyre:

Welcome to the Fifth Estate. When Canadians first learned that CIA brainwashing experiments had been carried out on Canadians in Canada, with the knowledge of our government, it was a tremendous shock. As the Fifth Estate was first to report in 1984, the work that Dr. Ewen Cameron oversaw at his Montreal clinic was shocking. Now, the story of Cameron's experiments, and the victims' struggle for justice, have been made into a riveting movie, to be broadcast on CBC Television this Sunday and Monday nights. For the victims of the "sleep room," the horror has never really ended.

Even if you don't know the history of the Allen Memorial Institute in Montreal, it looks like a natural setting for a movie -- a horror movie, maybe.

...women's scream...

But then the truth of what happened to hundreds of psychiatric patients there a long time ago is a horror story.

Male voice:

O.K. So we're on route, guys. Peaceably on.

Linden MacIntyre:

And now, it has become a movie -- a dramatized account of a bleak chapter in the history of Canadian psychiatry, produced by a former Fifth Estate documentary maker, Bernard Zuckerman.

The central character in the movie is a world-renowned psychiatrist at the Allen in the early 60s. His name was Dr. Ewen Cameron.

Male voice:

It's the classic story of good turning to evil in its most simplistic terms. Dr. Cameron started off as someone who is probably one of the most enlightened psychiatrists in the country, but then something happened, and whatever happened, suddenly here is this enlightened doctor, this noble doctor, who begins doing more and more and more bizarre experiments on his patients to the point where he is destroying the minds of hundreds of people.

Male speaker [giving a speech - could be Franklin Roosevelt]:

These are the days, and ours are the occasions.

Linden MacIntyre:

Inspired by the exuberant post-war optimism and technology, Cameron thought he'd achieved a major scientific breakthrough -- how to repair a damaged human mind. The media rejoiced -- even coined a phrase which would become a tragically silly oxymoron: "beneficial brainwashing."

Linda McDonald was a young mother with five children under the age of five, when she started feeling low. Her family doctor knew just the man to make her better.

Linda McDonald:

I was tired, I was depressed, my back was hurting -- and so he said, to the children's father, why don't you go to Montreal and visit this Dr. Ewen Cameron, this famous man, who has all of these accolades, and have an assessment.

So we went. My medical file even says that I took my guitar with me; and that was the end of my life.

Within three weeks Dr. Cameron decided to call me an acute schizophrenic, and shipped me up to the "sleep room."

Linden MacIntyre:

How long did they put you to sleep for?

Linda McDonald:

I was in a coma for 86 days.

Linden MacIntyre:

Eighty-six days of unbroken sleep.

Linda McDonald:

Yeah. Total comatose state.

Linden MacIntyre:

The theory was simple: erase a disturbed mind and start all over again.

One of Dr. Cameron's colleagues at the time was Dr. Peter Roper.

Dr. Peter Roper:

The aim, I think, really, was to wipe out the patterns of thought and behavior which were detrimental to the patient which were sick, and replace them with healthy patterns of thought and behavior. I think this may have been -- uh -- stimulated by the effects of the - - uh -- American troops of the war in Korea, how they seem to have been brainwashed.

Linden MacIntyre:

The movie called "The Sleep Room" dramatizes one technique for brainwashing: extreme sessions of electroshock therapy, massive jolts of electricity three or four times a day for weeks. According to her hospital records, Linda McDonald had one-hundred of these treatments.

She entered hospital for what we can now guess was post-partem depression. Her records show the results of shock and radical drug therapy.

May 15th shows some confusion; June 3rd: "Knows her name, but that's about all." June 11th: "Doesn't know her name."

Linda McDonald:

I was -- had to be toilet trained. I was a vegetable. I had no identity, I had no memory; I had never existed in the world before. Like a baby. Just like a baby that has to be toilet trained.

Linden MacIntyre:

She eventually went home, her depression gone, and her entire previous life gone with it.

Linda McDonald:

This is -- this is one of the twins, in 62 before I went to the Allen, and this is the same one I think. I just look at the pictures and I know that is who they are, but I don't remember them as my children at all. I mean, I know that they came from my body -- um -- but, there's no -- that's all. I don't know, and that's because I was told that. So, these are my children.

Linden MacIntyre:

Robert Loguey [spelling?] was little more than a child himself when he was referred to Dr. Cameron. He was 18, he had a sore leg. His doctor thought it was all in his head, and sent him to the Allen. Like Linda McDonald, he went through a nightmare of shock therapy and drugs, including LSD.

Robert Loguey:

Well, I was given LSD about every second day and -- uh -- injected, and -- uh -- sometimes it was mixed with sodium amethal and other drugs.

Film-maker:

One on one, take two.

Linden MacIntyre:

Most of the drugs were experimental but seemed suitable for brainwashing or, as Cameron preferred to call it, de-patterning. Then, during the long sleep, the patient would be forced to listen to subliminal messages that were supposed to print new, sometimes bizarre, thoughts on his blank mind.

Robert Loguey:

I was aware of the speaker under my pillow; I was aware of the words.

Linden MacIntyre:

Which were?

Robert Loguey:

"You killed your mother."

Linden MacIntyre:

"You killed your mother."

Robert Loguey:

Yeah.

Linden MacIntyre:

Who was alive and well.

Robert Loguey:

Who was alive and well. And, uh...

Linden MacIntyre:

Over and over again this voice is talking....

Robert Loguey:

Uh, well, like I say, it takes about two seconds to say that message, and this was going on for 23 days, and -- uh -- when I went home, after being there, when I went home my mother was there, and why was she there, and -- it didn't make any sense.

Linden MacIntyre:

So what was going on here? Dr. Ewen Cameron was at one point head of the World Psychiatric Association, and is still admired by some of his former colleagues. Dr. Peter Roper:

What is the possibility that we had a good, well-motivated man whose ego and ambition took charge of his professionalism and led him into some fairly dark places?

Dr. Peter Roper:

Well, I would put that chance as pretty slight. I think it's more likely that -- um -- if he'd been around to defend himself when this story came out, we'd have a perfectly different picture of it.

Linden MacIntyre:

What would he say? Put yourself in his shoes; what would he say?

Dr. Peter Roper:

Uh -- I think he'd say -- uh -- "look, I treated these patients to the best of my ability; I -- uh -- I didn't get all of them well, but most of them I got better than they were.

Movie excerpt, actor:

A travesty. I agree.

Linden MacIntyre:

But in the movie, Dr. Cameron will not come off so well.

Movie excerpt, actor:

They're your patients. Most of these people were discharged as cured.

Linden MacIntyre:

It accurately shows that many of his patients, inaccurately diagnosed as schizophrenics, were permanently damaged by his methods.

Movie excerpt: woman screaming.

Linden MacIntyre:

Eventually even Cameron had doubts about his experiments. He left the Allen in 1964, died of a heart attack three years later. By then, the hospital had quietly abandoned the experiments.

Movie excerpt, actor, angered:

So, these people had nothing. You can't just walk away from this, Cameron! It'll come back and it'll ruin you! You can't walk away!

Linden MacIntyre:

Nobody knows for sure exactly how many people doctor Cameron and his colleagues exposed to the program of chemical and electro-shock treatments they called de-patterning and psychic driving, a process which some experts have since called barbaric. But many years would pass before there would be any public or official acknowledgment of what those damaged patients had been through. It would take a dramatic disclosure in the late 70s. But the Allen memorial had been part of a cold war program of brainwashing experiments, paid for in part by the CIA. Hidden among its most sensitive files were CIA records documenting a project called MKULTRA.

Between 1957 and 1961 a CIA front funneled about 62,000 dollars US for brainwashing research by Dr. Ewen Cameron.

The American media got the story first, but The Fifth Estate exposed the magnitude of the human tragedy.

Fifth Estate Announcer (historical):

Experimental drugs, including LSD, were administered to human guinea pigs. The patients were never told that their treatment was part of a CIA experiment.

Linden MacIntyre:

One of those patients was Velma Orlikow of Winnipeg. She'd been at the Allen in the late 50s for treatment of depression. She happened to be married to a member of parliament, David Orlikow of the NDP. She'd considered Dr. Cameron a near-saint. Now she was being told she'd been betrayed by him.

Velma Orlikow:

It was an awful feeling to realize, when I found this out, that the man whom I had thought cared about what happened to me didn't give a damn. I was a fly. Just a fly.

Linden MacIntyre:

First she felt hurt. Then she got angry, and decided to sue one of the most powerful institutions in the world, the CIA.

David Orlikow:

As a matter of fact, when she said she wanted to sue the CIA I said, "you're crazy, how a couple -- how can an ape[?] from Winnipeg sue the CIA?"

Linden MacIntyre:

But she did, along with eight other former patients -- a massive lawsuit that would consume many years and become an obsession for a distinguished American civil-liberties lawyer named Joseph Rauh].

Joseph Rauh:

Cameron, all he did was what the CIA was in effect asking him to do, and what he said he was going to do, and he did it.

Linden MacIntyre:

Rauh and a young assistant name James Turner knew they were up against a formidable opponent in the CIA, but they thought the odds would be evened a bit by help from a natural ally. They were in for a disappointment.

James Turner:

Well, we expected to have a very potent ally in the form of the Canadian government and, unfortunately, instead of helping their own citizens, because the Canadian

government was worried about its possible liability, the Mulrooney government in effect stabbed its citizens in the back at every turn of the litigation.

Linden MacIntyre:

Ottawa actually helped suppress a key piece of information: evidence that CIA officials at the US embassy had actually apologized to the Canadian government when the CIA experiments were first revealed. Jim Turner is still flabbergasted.

James Turner:

You gotta understand how important these apologies and expressions of regret were. This is an admission. This is legally admissible in court because it is one of the parties of the litigation saying, "I did something wrong and I'm sorry I did it." That is prima facie evidence of negligence and of wrong-doing that goes a long, long way to bringing the case to a timely conclusion instead of the protracted ten years of litigation that we had.

Movie excerpt:

And action!
Mr. Mulrooney!

Linden MacIntyre:

The movie underscores the impact of Ottawa's refusal to give the lawyers details of the CIA apology. The lawyers eventually upped the ante. On The Fifth Estate.

Fifth Estate director (historical):

And action.

Announcer:

Tonight on The Fifth Estate, startling revelations about the activities of the CIA in Canada.

Linden MacIntyre:

With a publicity wave gathering momentum, and the strength of the victims' case becoming more apparent, the CIA caved in the day before the trial was to begin. They settled out-of-court for 750,000 dollars. At the time it was the largest settlement the CIA had ever awarded, and it provides a dramatic finale for the movie.

Movie preview, actress:

Because we made them pay. They couldn't beat us! We won. Write that down, mister!

Linden MacIntyre:

Producer Bernard Zuckerman says, besides the financial terms, this was a major moral victory.

Bernard Zuckerman:

Here you've got nine "little" Canadian victims taking on probably the most powerful institution in America, the CIA, and, these "little" Canadians, they win -- they get the CIA to settle and give them money and, in effect, an apology saying, "what we did is wrong."

Linden MacIntyre:

The movie ends with a CIA settlement, but the story didn't end there. Troubling questions would persist, especially about the government of Canada.

So why was Ottawa so ambiguous when it came to helping some Canadian citizens get compensation from Washington for what they endured in a program that was inspired mostly by American Cold War fears?

Well, the answer was simple. The government of Canada was even more deeply involved in the Allen Memorial experiments than the Americans. Dr. Cameron's experiments were funded to the tune of half-a-million dollars by the Federal Department of Health and Welfare during the 50s, and the funding didn't stop then. They kicked in over 51,000 dollars after the CIA project ended in 1961, which was when a young, stressed-out mother named Linda McDonald became part of the Allen Memorial story.

When she discovered that her own government had been funding brainwashing experiments on her, she made a dramatic decision.

[To Linda McDonald] You decided to take on the government of Canada.

Linda McDonald:

Oh, sure. Well, hey, considering what I'd already been through, that was a snap! [Laughs.] You know, what else -- went on?

Linden MacIntyre:

It must have become obvious to you fairly quickly that you were ramming your head into a brick wall.

Linda McDonald:

Yes, yes. I'm stubborn too; it got to the point where every time, whether it was John Crosby or Reina Tishen [spelling?] or then the Honorable Ken Campbell, it got to be -- uh -- "you guys, we're gonna, we're gonna stay alive," and I said that to Brian Mulrooney too, "If you think I'm going away, you've got another thing coming. I'm not going to go away!" [Laughs.] I finally discovered...

Linden MacIntyre:

Linda McDonald would hound the federal government for four years before finally, in 1992, Ottawa grudgingly agreed to compensate her and some of Dr. Cameron's other victims 100,000 dollars each. In exchange, for signing away the right to sue the government or the hospital.

But it was an ambiguous victory. Ottawa refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing at the Allen, a conclusion backed up by a legal review of what happened there. The report, by a prominent progressive conservative lawyer, relied partly on expert advice from Dr. Frederick Grunberg [spelling?], one of Quebec's leading psychiatrists, who made two controversial assertions: the patients hadn't suffered irreparable harm, and that they had consented to the treatment.

Dr. Frederick Grunberg:

Well, when I went to -- uh -- the patient were admitted at -- uh -- the Allen Memorial Institute where patients were went in voluntarily. So, the sort of consent they gave is -- uh -- was sort of general consent to the hospital. So the consent that was given for surgery or any other procedure.

Linda McDonald:

Consent had nothing to do with it. Dr. Cameron did not describe the treatment; he did not clarify; he did not give any way shape or form, any kind of a hint what was going to happen. That's not consent, and, I don't even know whether he talked to me because I'll never remember anyway.

Linden MacIntyre:

Dr. Grunberg shares a widely-held view in his profession about the legacy of Dr. Ewen Cameron.

Dr. Frederick Grunberg:

I think he was a misguided man -- he worked on a sort of a very poor theoretical -- uh -- basis, and I think he was important -- uh -- considering, but I am convinced, still convinced, that -- uh -- he really wanted a therapeutic way through the -- he had this motivation that he was going to break this -- uh -- terrible -- uh -- condition.

Linden MacIntyre:

You seem to be saying, "the things that Cameron did were awful, but he meant well, so we'll forgive him, and the victims, or patients, will have to live with it."

Dr. Frederick Grunberg:

It's not a question of forgiving -- the thing is, we put what he was doing in the perspective of his time, and a lot of awful things were going on.

Linden MacIntyre:

A lot of people are saying, considering the accepted practice and the science available at the time, this was an appropriate thing to do to you. What...

Robert Loguey[?]:

It wasn't treatment -- uh -- if that's what you're suggesting, it wasn't treatment for anything; not a toenail, or anything. It was out and out guinea pigs for brainwashing experiments. That's what it was.

Linden MacIntyre:

It's been more than 33 years since the Allen put an end to the practices initiated by its most notorious doctor. It has recovered its world-class reputation as a leader in the treatment of mental illness.

Dr. Peter Roper was dismissed from the Allen two years after Dr. Cameron left. One of the reasons: he insisted on following Dr. Cameron's technique.

Review how you strenuously -- to continue the de-patterning of your patients.

Dr. Peter Roper:

Well, I felt that I had a duty to my patients to give them the best possible treatment, and if there were some who were not responding to any other form of treatment the only thing left was de-patterning for them, then I felt that should be done.

Linden MacIntyre:

You sound -- you sound almost nostalgic for the 50s and 60s.

Dr. Peter Roper:

Oh no, it's not nostalgia; it's the question, I think, that bothers a lot of doctors that it's rather sad if they're prevented from having that treatment because of adherence to political or other reasons which have nothing to do with good medical practice.

Linden MacIntyre:

For Linda McDonald, good medical practice in 1963 turned an emotional crisis into a horror that would haunt a lifetime.

[Sound of a gathering.]

Female voice:

Here we are.

Linda McDonald:

It feels strange.

Linden MacIntyre:

This spring she returned to the Ottawa high school where she graduated in 1957.

Anne Highland:

Hi, Linda. I'm Anne Argue[?] Highland. How are you?

Linda McDonald:

Oh! Well, hi.

Anne Highland:

I was in the liars club; I don't know if you remember.

Linda McDonald:

I don't remember at all!

Anne Highland:

Oh, well that's normal.

Linda McDonald:

And all of these people -- we knew all of these people.

Linden MacIntyre:

She has no memory of this place, or those times, or even of who she was back then.

Linda McDonald:

Oh, here I am. Look at me! You did call me Lindy?

[Back to interview.]

I am who I am today. My family tells me that I am very much like the Linda that they knew when I was growing up: gregarious, always talking, laughing, singing, happy, positive person. I have no memory of that person; all I'm grateful for is that Cameron might have been able to wipe a memory but he couldn't wipe a spirit.

Announcer:

The Fifth Estate will return in a moment...

[End of Cameron segment.]

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